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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, SE RICHARD WILLIAMSON, S/CRS, IO
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SUBJECT: JANE HOLL LUTE PREVIEWS MESSAGE TO UNSC ON DARFUR

REF: A) KHARTOUM 502

B) KHARTOUM 434

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. United Nations outgoing Under-Secretary-General in the Department of Field Support (DFS) Jane Holl Lute said that the only way for the UN to deploy the bulk of UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) forces in 2008 was with the parallel provision of enabling assets, a point she intended to make at her April 22 briefing to the UN Security Council (UNSC). Holl Lute indicated she was in agreement with the USG plan to make troops "deployable" according to UN standards by a certain date as long the UN maintained the latitude it needs to subsequently send them to the field as it sees fit. END SUMMARY.

DFS ON SAME PAGE WITH USG?

12. (SBU) In an April 13 meeting UN Under-Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute, on a four-day visit to Darfur, told FieldOff she had come to ground-truth the recently concluded UNAMID deployment plan and to ensure that deployment was moving as well as possible, given the logistical constraints crippling the mission. She confirmed that the UN "wants to deploy the bulk of the force by the end of 2008," including most of the 19,000 military troops and an increased number of police units.

13. (SBU) To do this, Holl Lute elaborated, would require the international community to make good on its pledges of help. Rather than just being seen as "doing something" (she referred specifically to the "Gordon Brown Initiative," whereby the UK Prime Minister offered to host a summit in London for Sudanese government officials and rebel movement representatives in a latest diplomatic attempt to resume peace talks, create a lasting ceasefire and foster reconciliation efforts), Holl Lute recommended that the international community address the real needs of UNAMID, a point she intended to make at an April 22 briefing to the UNSC.

14. (SBU) According to U/SYG Holl Lute, these needs include enabling assets necessary to prepare for the arrival of the new forces. They included additional engineering capabilities, long-range transport, communications equipment and borehole drilling equipment [NOTE: Holl Lute made no mention of pre-existing as-yet undelivered engineering assets, including those for the Chinese in Nyala, which remain held up in customs due to UNAMID disputes with a local contractor. END NOTE]. Holl Lute confirmed that her trip to Darfur was meant to better inform this list of UNAMID needs, which she would then outline for the UNSC on April 22. "The three most important things to troops on the field anywhere," Holl Lute declared, "are ways to connect back home [communications], means of getting back home [transportation], and not being wet and hungry for long periods in the meantime." With regard to rations (which have been plaguing UNAMID for the past two weeks, with food either not reaching troops or not being consumable by the time it reaches troops) Holl Lute

seemed surprised that ration shortages were an issue and assured that this situation was under control. [NOTE: For the past two weeks, UNAMID officials have been highlighting the rations shortage issue as the number one problem facing the mission. END NOTE].

15. (SBU) U/SYG Holl Lute was receptive to the plan explained by SPG representatives at a meeting of the Friends of UNAMID in New York during the week of April 6, whereby the USG is procuring equipment for troop-contributing countries in conformity with the UN's own articulated standards and is training and equipping these TCCs to deploy by a specific date. Holl Lute cautioned, however, that essential to the success of this plan was assuring that TCCs know the type of "austere" conditions into which they are dispatching their forces. Also essential, said Holl Lute, was that the UN maintained the "latitude" it needed to make final deployment decisions.

UNANSWERED DEPLOYMENT QUESTIONS REMAIN

16. (SBU) Despite this agreement, U/SYG Holl Lute and Acting Chief of Integrated Support Services (CISS) Nick Von Ruben saw some gaps in UNAMID deployment. (Note: Von Ruben was formerly Holl Lute's Deputy and was asked by her to stay on until December as CISS after the intended appointment of Bruce McCaren fell through. End note.) They identified helicopters as a persistent problem (despite the recent donation by actor George Clooney of over five million dollars earmarked for helicopter assets for UNAMID). Holl Lute explained that UNAMID needs military helicopters outfitted with all the "add-ons" (including night vision capabiQQ)PH7oflying. Both Holl Lute and Von Ruben stressed the need to match military helicopters with military pilots and to acquire the

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means to maintain these assets in order for them to be useful to the mission.

17. (SBU) Acting CISS Von Ruben inquired about the status of the USG's training and equipping efforts for incoming UNAMID battalions. Von Ruben acknowledged that the Ethiopian and Egyptian battalions were ready but expressed doubt at FieldOff's statement that at least one Rwanda battalion could have its equipment by June 1.

18. (SBU) FieldOff asked U/SYG Holl Lute about the status of UN efforts to deploy the incoming Ethiopian battalion to Kulbus/Silea in Sector West, instead of to El Fasher in Sector North as originally planned (Ref B). Holl Lute assured that this notification was on track and that the Ethiopian Government was on board, but she did not give specific indications that the requisite Note Verbale to the Ethiopian Mission had been sent in New York. Von Ruben confirmed that camp expansion was on track "per the Force Commander's priorities" (which included construction of a camp at Korma and expansion of camps in Kulbus and Silea, per refuels) to receive new assets from split battalions. In a more downbeat assessment, the Chinese Ambassador to Sudan told CDA Fernandez on April 13 that UNAMID had woefully underestimated the availability of water, not just at the Nyala supercamp being built but Chinese engineers, but also in North and West Darfur.

COMMENT

19. (SBU) U/SYG Holl Lute's comment about the desire of the UN to deploy the bulk of its forces this year seems at odds with an earlier statement made by the Acting CISS that UNAMID was only capable of getting only 4,465 troops in by December 31 (Ref A). The alarmist tone of two weeks ago has suddenly softened, due no doubt to the need to put a positive spin on deployment in the presence of his boss. Despite the happy face, outstanding questions remain, including the need for definitive follow-up by the UN with the Ethiopians to assure proper deployment of that country's incoming battalion.

110. (SBU) It appears that Holl Lute's visit may not be to judge conditions on the ground as much as to "ground-truth" her own preconceptions (which is constructive). Her focus is on acquiring the necessary military assets for UNAMID, such as military helicopters (with pilots). Holl Lute wants UNAMID to own the assets

and not borrow them as it did with SKYLINK but the overall image post has described repeatedly remains: a UN mission that is disorganized, divided and under-equipped, with indifferent support from DPKO, and this is a reality that no number of high-level visitors from New York has yet been able to shake.

11. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

FERNANDEZ